NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS

Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS)

IPEDS Data Center
User Manual Part 1

User Manual

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Chapter

1

Introduction

*This chapter introduces you to the basic format of this User
Manual and provides a general overview of the IPEDS Data
Center features and functionalities.*

T he Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS) is the National Center for Education Statistics' (NCES) core postsecondary education data collection program. Information is collected annually from all providers of postsecondary education in fundamental areas such as enrollments, program completion and graduation rates, institutional costs, student financial aid, and human resources.

The primary means by which these data are released to both providers of postsecondary education and the public is through the **IPEDS Data Center**. Designed as a centralized, web-based tool for the retrieval and analysis of IPEDS data, the system allows users to access and evaluate institutional data using a wide-range of analytical features that includes the ability to construct customized data sets, download full data files, and to create different reports including statistical and trend analysis reports.

This user manual is intended to guide you through the various functions, processes, and capabilities of the IPEDS Data Center. While most users should find that they are able to successfully and effectively navigate the system without a detailed set of instructions, a wealth of information, hints, tips, and insights are provided to help focus your time and efforts more productively. Some users may find that browsing is a better way to learn from this manual than reading straight through it. This will depend largely on the extent and goals of usage, as well as on your past experience with other NCES software applications such as the Peer Analysis System (PAS), Dataset Cutting Tool (DCT), Executive Peer Tool (ExPT), and Data Analysis System (DAS).

I C O N K E Y	
❗	Critical information
☑	Hints/tips
📖	Key terms
✐	Test your knowledge

The user manual is divided into sections representing each of the major functions within the Data Center. You can access it at any time by clicking on the [image: Help] link from the navigation menu at the top of the screen. Additionally, context sensitive help buttons are available throughout. Look for the 🛈 icon for guidance and information related to a specific screen or process.

Getting Started

Upon accessing the Data Center main page, the Main Menu is displayed on the left side of the screen, as shown below. As its name implies, this menu contains links and navigation controls to all other parts of the system. You can access this page at any time while working in the Data Center either by clicking on the [image: IPEDS DATA CENTER] heading, or the [image: Start over] link from the navigation menu at the top of the screen.

Please note that clicking on the **IPEDS Data Center** heading will allow you to retain any information you have already entered in the system; whereas, the **Start over** link will clear your data and begin a new session.

Click on a task from the main menu to begin your Data Center session. You can hold the mouse over any menu option without selecting it to view a brief description of the related functionality, as shown below:
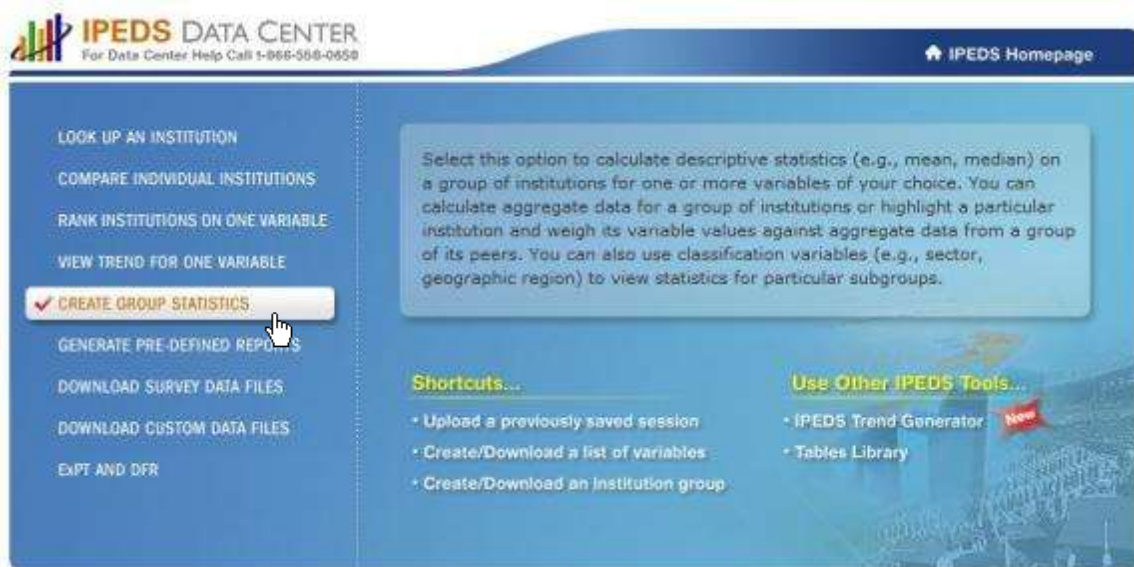
Additional options are also available under the **Shortcuts…** and **Use Other IPEDS Tools…** menus near the bottom of the screen:

Shortcuts…

Returning users can click on the related links in the **Shortcuts…** menu to quickly create and save a new institution group or variable list for use with any of the wide-range of Data Center tools and functionalities (this can also be done within each function). Additionally, users can use the 'Upload a previously saved session' link to enter a **Job Number** and upload a saved Data Center session.

Use Other IPEDS Tools…

For your convenience, the **Use Other IPEDS Tools…** menu contains several links to additional IPEDS Tools (such as the **IPEDS Trend Generator** and the **Tables Library**). You can also access additional resources and information related to IPEDS data by selecting the **IPEDS Homepage** link in the top right-hand corner.

Once you have selected a task within the Data Center, you will be asked to indicate the type of data you want to access:

Preliminary Release Data

Select this option to access any preliminary release data that are available for the most recent data year. Preliminary release data have been edited and released via the NCES *First Look (Preliminary Data)* publications; but are still subject to further NCES quality control procedures. In addition, imputed data for non-responding institutions are not included.

For your reference, a list of the IPEDS data components with preliminary release data available is displayed along with the relevant data year, as shown below:
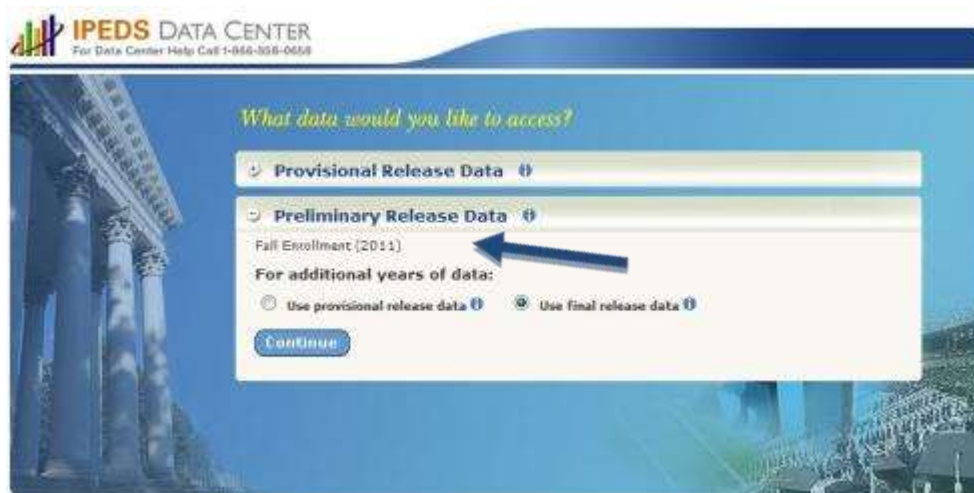
Note: Preliminary release data are only available for the most recent data year, and remain available until all NCES quality control procedures are complete and the *First Look (Provisional Data)* publications are released. Once this happens, the data become provisional release data. Due to the nature of this data release cycle, preliminary release data are not always available. In this case, users must select the **Provisional Release Data** option to continue.

Imputation

A method of estimating data (or filling in the blanks) for institutions that did not respond to a data item or survey. Data that have completed the imputation (or imputing) process are commonly referred to as 'imputed data'.

Provisional Release Data

Select this option to access the provisional release data available for the most recent data year. Provisional release data have undergone all NCES quality control procedures and been released via the NCES *First Look (Provisional Data)* publications. These data have been imputed for non-responding institutions; but are still subject to additional revisions that may be submitted by institutions during the subsequent data collection year through the IPEDS Prior Year Revision (PYR) System.

For your reference, a list of each IPEDS component and the most recent year of provisional release data available is displayed along with the relevant data year, as shown below:

Once you have selected the type of data you want to access for the most recent data year, you must also indicate the type of data you want to access for all additional years of data:

Use provisional release data
This option allows you to access previously reported IPEDS data as the data were reported to NCES in the original data collection (and subsequently published via the *First Look (Provisional Data)* publications). These data underwent all NCES quality control procedures, including imputation. However, any revisions to the data submitted by institutions during the subsequent data year through the IPEDS PYR System are not included.

Use final release data
This option allows you to access previously reported IPEDS data that include any revisions to the provisional release data made by institutions through the IPEDS PYR System. Final release data can be used when the most up to date data is required; however, they may not match the tables from the NCES First Look publication.

By default, the **Use final release data** option is selected, but you can click on the corresponding radio button to modify these settings and **Use provisional release data** instead.

Once you are satisfied with your selections, click **Continue**. Then explore the system, as needed, to familiarize yourself with all of the available features and functionalities. You can use the **Main Menu** drop down at the top of the screen to navigate between tasks at any time, as shown below:

Helpful Hints and Tips

Here you will find some general hints and tips for using the IPEDS Data Center. More detailed tips related to specific functions within the application can be found in the corresponding sections of this user manual.

● You can always call the IPEDS Data Center Help Desk at 866-558-0658.

● You can save session data at any time and access it later during subsequent Data Center sessions by clicking on the 💾 Save session link at the top of the screen. Your data will be saved on the NCES server for 30 days. It is recommended that you save frequently to avoid potential data loss resulting from system failures, power outages, or other unforeseen circumstances.

● When generating a report, you can use the tabbed links at the top of the screen to quickly navigate back and forth between steps, as shown below:
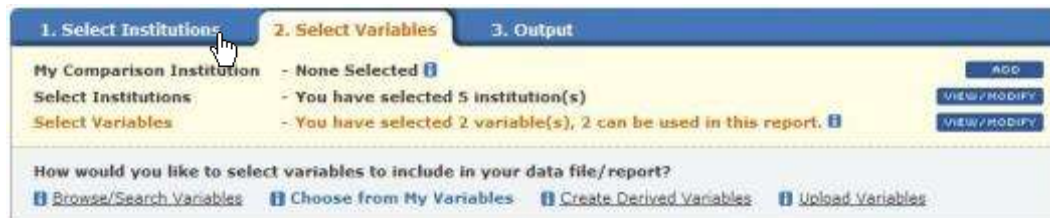
● Any institutions and/or variables you select for a particular function or process will be stored in your **My Institutions** and **My Variables** lists respectively throughout your Data Center session. This allows you to easily reuse your selections for various operations without having to navigate the same screens and processes multiple times. Click on VIEW/MODIFY to see the lists and/or make changes.

● Most lists in the Data Center can be sorted based on various criteria; such as, Institution Name, Variable Name, Data Year, or Ranking Value. Look for active column headings (displayed with an underscore) to identify lists that can be sorted; then click on the corresponding column heading to sort the list accordingly. For example, you might click on **Institution Name** to view a list of search results in alphabetical order by institution name. By default, results are generally displayed in ascending order (A-Z or lowest to highest numeric value), but you can click on a column heading multiple times to toggle the view between ascending and descending order.

Chapter

2

Create / Download an Institution Group

This chapter contains detailed instructions for creating, modifying, and saving a list of institutions for a data file or report in the IPEDS Data Center.

A wide range of customizable reports and analytical tools are available for review and analysis of institutional data in the IPEDS Data Center. These are all discussed in greater detail in subsequent chapters of this User Manual.

It is important to note however, that regardless of which tool you are using, the first step in creating any data file or report within the Data Center is to select the institutions that you want to compare or evaluate. This can be done in several ways (click on the links below to learn more about each):

By Names or UnitIDs

By Groups

By Variables

By Uploading a File **(Power User Account Required)**

The methods you use will most likely vary depending on your data needs and which report you are generating, so it is a good idea to familiarize yourself with each of the available processes.

Note: The selection of institutions can also be completed within an individual function, and does not need to be completed via Create/Download an Institution Group.

As you select institutions, they will be stored in your **My Institutions** list for continued use throughout your current Data Center session. You can modify this list at any time, or save it for future use in subsequent Data Center sessions. Click on the links above to learn more about each process.

By Names or UnitIDs

This is the default method of selecting institutions for your data file/report. You can use this option to search for institutions by full or partial Institution Name or UnitID.

UnitID
The unique six-digit identifier assigned to all institutions that have submitted data to IPEDS.

You can access this option at any time by clicking on the **By Names or UnitIDs** link from the Select Institutions toolbar, as shown below:

Enter your search value in the box provided, as shown in the example above. A list of potential matches will be displayed as you type. Remember, you do not need to enter the entire Institution Name; the system will return results for partial names as well.

☑ Tip

When searching for institutions by UnitID, you can enter just one UnitID or a list of multiple UnitIDs separated by commas. The latter option will greatly reduce your search time for larger Institution Groups.

Click on an institution to add it to your Institution Group, as shown below:

You can also click on **Select** to open the full list of search results in a new window and select multiple institutions from this list to include in your data file/report:

Note the active column headers for **Institution Name**, **City**, and **State**. This list can be sorted! Click on the related column heading to sort the list of search results accordingly.

Click on the corresponding checkboxes to select the institutions that you want to include in your Institution Group. You can also click on **Check all** to select the entire list of institutions, or **Uncheck All** to clear any selections you have made and start again.

Once you are satisfied with your selections, click **Continue**. The specified institutions will be added to your **My Institutions** list, as shown below:

You can add additional institutions to this list at any time by clicking on the **By Names or UnitIDs** link to search again, or by using one of the other available options from the Select Institutions toolbar.

Test your knowledge:
Using the **By Names or UnitIDs** option, create an Institution Group comprised of all Ivy League universities in the United States. Your list should include: Brown University, Columbia University, Cornell University, Dartmouth College, Harvard University, Princeton University, University of Pennsylvania, and Yale University. When you are finished save your Institution Group to complete this exercise.

By Groups

Instead of constructing your own Institution Group you can have the system generate one for you. To access this option, click on the **By Groups** link from the Select Institutions toolbar, as shown below:

Several methods are available for creating a system-generated Institution Group. Click on the links below to learn more about each:

[EZ Group](#)

[Automatic Group](#)

[Saved Group](#)

EZ Group

The EZ Group method allows you to quickly create an Institution Group based on one or more frequently used criteria such as sector of institution, geographic location, or specialized educational mission (e.g. Historically Black College or University, Tribal College, etc.).

To utilize this option, click on **EZ Group** from the **By Groups** toolbar, as shown below:
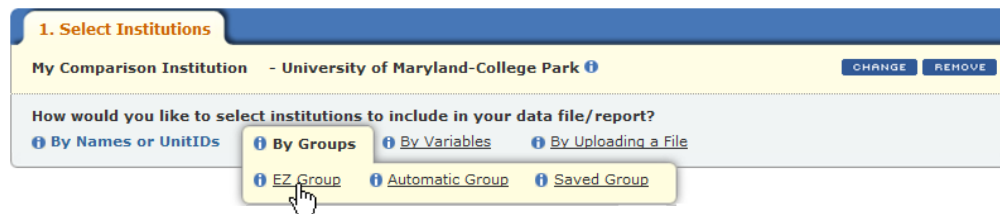

If you have selected a Comparison Institution for the current data file/report, a summary of general information about the selected Comparison Institution is displayed at the top of the screen for your reference. In addition, note that for each selectable category or characteristic in the lower portion of the screen, the Comparison Institution value is highlighted in orange, as demonstrated in the example on the next page.

Start by identifying the universe year from which you want to select your Institution Group. By default, the most recent data year available will be selected as the universe year, but you can choose an alternate year at any time by clicking on the **change year** link, as shown below:
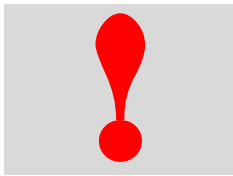
Please note that the **change year** link is not available when creating a Comparison Group within the **ExPT and DFR** component. In this case, an EZ Group can only be generated based on the most recent universe year.

Using the checkboxes provided, select the criteria you wish to apply to your Institution Group.

You can click on the adjacent ▦ icon to view and/or choose additional criteria from the list of available **Special Characteristics.** Where applicable, click on the ⓘ icon to learn more about a specific category. A help file will open containing either a definition of that category, or a description of the types of institutions included in that category. Within each category, you can click **Check All** to select the entire list of criteria, or **Uncheck All** to clear any selections you have made and start again:

When you are finished selecting values for a particular characteristic, click **Close** to save your entries and close the pop-up box. Any categories for which you have selected criteria will remain highlighted in orange. You can reopen the list of criteria at any time to modify your selections.

As you select various criteria, they will be displayed in the **Criteria Summary** box at the bottom of the screen for your reference. In addition, the system will automatically update the number of matching institutions in your potential Institution Group as you work:

Once you are satisfied with the selected criteria, click the [Search] button. If you have already selected/uploaded institutions for a previous function during the current Data Center session you will be prompted to choose from the following options for creating your new Institution Group:

Combine the two sets and eliminate duplicates
Click on this option to combine the results of the current query with any existing institutions in your **My Institutions** list and eliminate any duplicates.

Keep only the institutions existing in the two sets
Click on this option to retain only those institutions that are present in *both* the results of the current query and your existing **My Institutions** list.

Disregard the previous set and keep this one
Click on this option to remove any existing institutions from your **My Institutions** list and use only the results of the current query.

Any institutions that match the specified criteria will automatically be added to your **My Institutions** list for the current data file/report.

Test your knowledge:
Using the **EZ Group** option, create an Institution Group comprised of all Land Grant institutions in the state of Montana for data year 2006. The resulting Institution Group should contain a total of **8** institutions. When you are finished, save your Institution Group to complete this exercise.
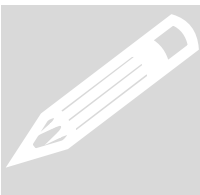
Automatic Group

If you have selected a Comparison Institution for the current data file/report, you can use the **Automatic Group** option to generate an automatic peer group for the selected institution based on a set of predefined criteria such as control and level of institution, degree-granting status, Title IV status, Carnegie Classification, and geographic region. This list is the same as the peer group created in the ExPT for an institution's Data Feedback Report.

To utilize this option, click on **Automatic Group** from the **By Groups** toolbar, as shown below:
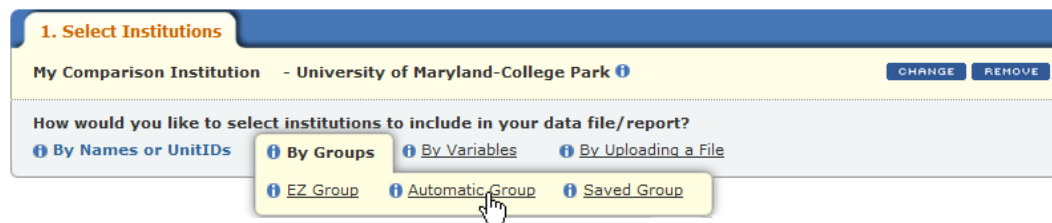
If you have already selected/uploaded institutions in this function, or while working in a previous function during the Data Center session, you will be prompted to 'Combine the two sets and eliminate duplicates', 'Keep only the institutions existing in the two sets', or 'Disregard the previous set and keep this one' (for more detail, see above).

The system will automatically compile a list of peers for the selected Comparison Institution and add them to your **My Institutions** list for the current data file/report.

Test your knowledge:
Using **Pennsylvania State University – Main Campus** (UnitID 214777) as your Comparison Institution, generate an Automatic Group of peers for this institution for use with any data file/report in the Data Center. The resulting Institution Group should contain a total of **30** institutions. When you are finished, save your Institution Group to complete this exercise.

Saved Group

Similar to the **Automatic Group** option, the **Saved Group** option allows you to load a saved institution group for a selected Comparison Institution defined by the institution itself.

To utilize this option, click on **Saved Group** from the **By Groups** toolbar, as shown below:
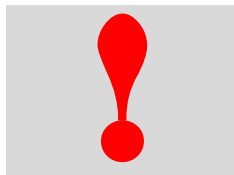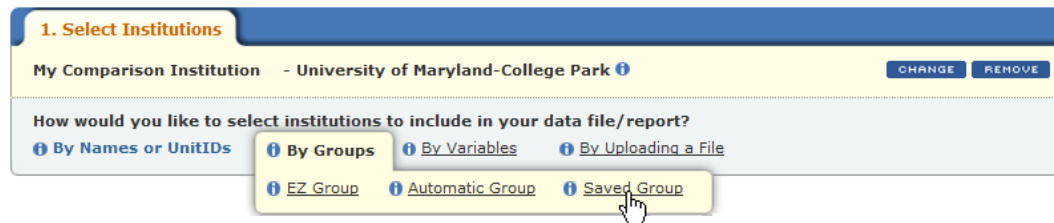
Saved Groups are not available for all institutions. If a Saved Group is not available for the specified Comparison Institution, an error will occur, and you will be prompted to select another means of creating your Institution Group.
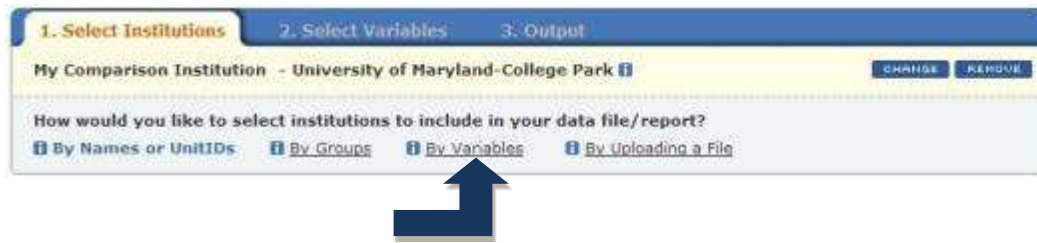
If you have already selected/uploaded institutions in this function, or while working in a previous function during the Data Center session, you will be prompted to 'Combine the two sets and eliminate duplicates', 'Keep only the institutions existing in the two sets', or 'Disregard the previous set and keep this one' (for more detail, see p. 15).

The system will automatically load the saved peer group, where applicable, for the selected Comparison Institution and add it to your **My Institutions** list for the current data file/report.

By Variables

The **By Variables** method allows you to construct an Institution Group based on one or more shared characteristics such as size, geographic location, control of institution, or Carnegie Classification. You can search for institutions using any IPEDS variable or combination of variables you want. For example, you might use this option to compile a list of public 4-year institutions in the Mid East region of the United States, or to select all institutions in the state of California with a total enrollment of more than 10,000 students.

To access this option, click on the **By Variables** link from the Select Institutions toolbar, as shown below:

Start by choosing the variables that you want to use to define your Institution Group. If you have already selected/uploaded variables for a previous function during the current Data Center session, your existing **My Variables** list will automatically be displayed.

My Variables

As you navigate the Data Center, selecting IPEDS variables for various functions and purposes, these variables are stored in your **My Variables** list for easy access should you wish to use them again during the current session.

You can select up to 20 variables to use as your criteria for creating your Institution Group. Choose from the existing variables in your **My Variables** list, or select new variables for this purpose using any or all of the following options:

Browse/Search Variables

This is the default method of selecting variables for your data file/report. Browse a list of IPEDS variables, and/or search for variables by name or keyword.

Choose From My Variables

Return to your **My Variables** list. Please note that this option is only applicable if you have already selected/uploaded variables during the current Data Center session.

Create Derived Variables

Derive new, custom variables from the existing IPEDS survey variables through addition, subtraction, or division.

Upload Variables

Upload a saved list of variables created in the Data Center or the IPEDS Peer Analysis System. *Please note that a Power User account is required to utilize this option.*

Note: Selecting variables is a process critical to a number of functions in the Data Center. For detailed instructions, please refer to *Chapter 3 – Create / Download a List of Variables*.

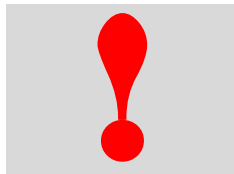Any new variables that you select for this process will be added to your **My Variables** list, as shown below:

Note the active column headers for **<u>Year</u>** and **<u>Variable</u>**. This list can be sorted! Click on the corresponding column heading to sort the variables in a particular file accordingly.

Click on the corresponding checkboxes to select the variables that you want to use to define your Institution Group; then click **Continue**.

Next, use the **Institution Selection Form** (shown below) to identify the values that you want to apply to your search:

Note that if you have selected a Comparison Institution for the current data file/report, the Comparison Institution Value for each variable is displayed on the right side of the screen for your reference.

Comparison Institution

A Comparison Institution (previously known as the Focus Institution in IPEDS PAS), while not required, can still be selected for most reports in the Data Center. This feature allows you to highlight an institution in a data file/report and compare its variable values with those of a user-selected or system defined peer group.

Select a variable and click on the adjacent 📄 icon to open the corresponding **Search Value(s)** pop-up screen:

Depending on the type of variable you have selected, you will be prompted to enter your search value(s) in one of two ways:

- By selecting one or more values from a list of available options (as shown in the example above), **or**

- By entering numeric values and using operators to define your search criteria as follows:

Operators	
>	(greater than)
<	(less than)
=	(equal to)
>=	(greater than or equal to)
<=	(less than or equal to)
RANGE	(a range between two values)

For example, you might select the **<** operator and enter *15000* to identify institutions with in-state tuition of less than $15,000; or click on the **>=** operator and enter *10000* to locate institutions with a total enrollment greater than or equal to 10,000 students, as shown below:

Numeric entries must be in the form of whole numbers and should not contain any special characters (e.g. commas, decimals, dollar signs, etc.). The only exception to this is ratio defined variables where use of a decimal point is required for entry of search values.

When you are finished entering the search values for a particular variable, click **Save** to save your entries and close the **Search Value(s)** pop-up screen. Repeat this process for each of the variables in the **Institutions Selection Form**. You can reopen the **Search Value(s)** window for any variable at any time to modify your selections.

Once you have specified search values for *each* of the variables in the **Institutions Selection Form**, click **Submit.** If you have already selected/uploaded institutions in this function, or while working in a previous function during the Data Center session, you will be prompted to 'Combine the two sets and eliminate duplicates', 'Keep only the institutions existing in the two sets', or 'Disregard the previous set and keep this one' (for more detail, see p. 15).

Any institutions that match the specified criteria will automatically be added to your **My Institutions** list for the current data file/report.

Test your knowledge:
Using the **By Variables** option, create an Institution Group comprised of all private not-for-profit four-year institutions in the District of Columbia. (Hint: Your list of variables should include **Sector of institution** and **State abbreviation**.) All of the selected variables should be for the 2006-07 data year. The resulting Institution Group should contain a total of **12** institutions. When you are finished save your Institution Group to complete this exercise.

By Uploading a File

If you have a previously saved Institution Group created in either the Data Center or the IPEDS Peer Analysis System that you would like to use in the current data file/report, you can retrieve it at any time by clicking on the **By Uploading a File** link from the Select Institutions toolbar, as shown below:
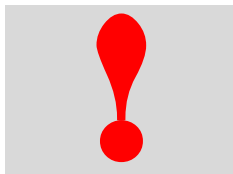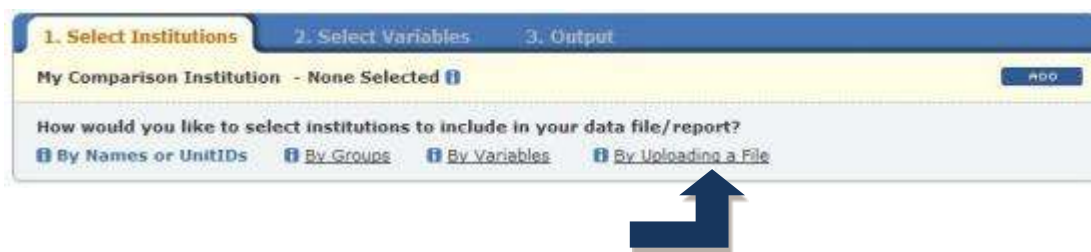
Please note that a Power User account is required to upload Variable List files to the Data Center. Click on the link to **Login**, and then enter your User Name and Password when prompted. If you do not have a Power User account you can create one by clicking on the link to **Create an account**.

Once you have logged in, you can retrieve your file by entering the complete path and filename in the box provided, as shown below; or you can use the **Browse** button to locate the file on your computer's hard drive. *Hint:* Institution Group files will have a filename extension of **.uid**.

When you are finished, click **Submit** to upload your saved Institution Group. If you have already selected/uploaded institutions in this function, or while working in a previous function during the Data Center session, you will be prompted to 'Combine

the two sets and eliminate duplicates', 'Keep only the institutions existing in the two sets', or 'Disregard the previous set and keep this one' (for more detail, see p. 15).

The uploaded institutions will automatically be added to your **My Institutions** list for the current data file/report.

Modifying Your Institution Group

As you select institutions, they will be added to your **My Institutions** list, as shown below. Note that the institutions in this list are stored throughout your current Data Center session for use with any data files or reports you choose to generate. You can add additional institutions to the list at any time by clicking on one of the available options from the Select Institutions toolbar.

To make changes to the list, click on **Modify**; then choose from the following options:

Keep Selected

Using the checkboxes provided, select the institutions that you want to *keep* in your Institution Group; then click on **Keep Selected**. Any institutions that you have not selected will be removed from the list.

Remove Selected

Using the checkboxes provided, identify any institutions that you want to *remove* from your Institution Group; then click on **Remove Selected** to delete them from the list.

Remove All

Select this option to delete all of the existing institutions from your Institution Group and start again.

Saving Your Institution Group

You can save your Institution Group at any time and access it later during subsequent Data Center sessions. To do so, select one of the following formatting options; then follow the steps outlined below to save your data accordingly:

Save data on the NCES server

The information from your current Data Center session can be saved on the NCES server for thirty days. To utilize this option, click on the **Save session** link from the navigation menu at the top of the screen. You will receive a Job Number for your saved data. **This Job Number is very important!** You will need it to retrieve your data during future Data Center sessions. Write it down for safekeeping, and/or enter your email address in the space provided and click **Send** to have the Job Number emailed to you, as shown below:
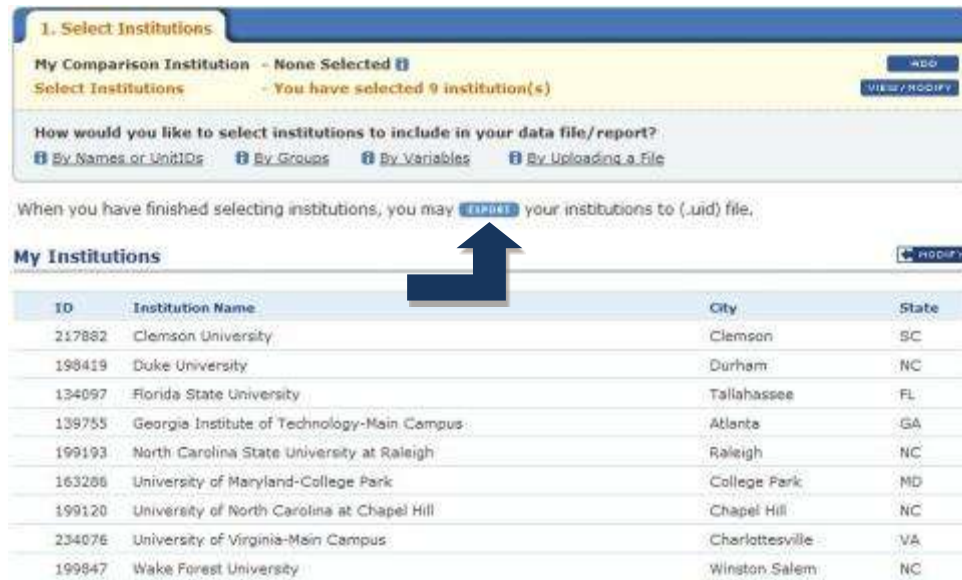
Download in CSV format

You can also download your Institution Group to your computer's hard drive in zipped, comma separated values (CSV) format. To do so, select the **Create/Download institution group** option from the **Main Menu**; then, from the **My Institutions** view, click on **Export**:

Your browser will walk you through the file save process. The filename extension for your saved Institution Group will be **.uid**.
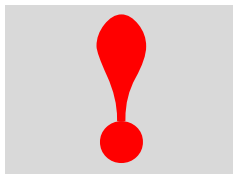
Do not modify the filename extension in any way or the system will not be able to recognize the file when you try to upload it, and it will subsequently be unusable.